United Nations CEDAW/C/GMB/CO/4-5

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Gambia*

1. The Committee considered the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Gambia (CEDAW/C/GMB/4-5) at its 1311th and 1312th meetings, on 9 July 2015 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1311 and 1312). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/GMB/Q/4-5 and the responses of the Gambia are contained in CEDAW/C/GMB/Q/4-5/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates that the State party submitted its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group and welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its delegation, which was headed by the Acting Deputy Solicitor General and Curator of Intestate Estates, Isatou Alwar Graham, and included representatives of the Office of the Vice-President and the National Women's Bureau. The Committee appreciates the dialogue that took place between the delegation and the Committee, while noting that several questions were not fully answered.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2005 of the State party's combined initial, second and third periodic reports (CEDAW/C/GMB/1-3) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following legislation:

(a) Domestic Violence Act, in 2013;

(b) Sexual Offences Act, in 2013;

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-first session (6-24 July 2015).

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(c) Women's Act, in 2010;

(d) Legal Aid Act, in 2008;

(e) Trafficking in Persons Act, in 2007.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption of the following:

(a) Maternal and Child Nutrition and Health Results Project, 2014-2019;

(b) National Plan of Action on Gender-based Violence, 2013-2017;

(c) Gender and Women's Empowerment Policy, 2010-2020;

(d) National Education Policy, 2004-2015.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous reports, the State party has ratified or acceded to the following instruments:

(a) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, in 2015;

(b) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2010.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

National Assembly

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites the National Assembly, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.**

Legislative framework

8. The Committee notes that many provisions of the Convention have been incorporated into national law through the adoption of relevant legislation, in particular the Women's Act in 2010. It remains concerned, however, that the legislation does not adequately address female genital mutilation, marital rape or child marriage. It also remains concerned about the constitutional provision under which the prohibition of discrimination does not apply in respect of adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and devolution of property upon death and the fact that these issues are regulated under personal law, which contains discriminatory provisions, some of which are re-enacted in the Women's Act.

9. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Harmonize national legislation, including the Constitution, the Women's Act and personal laws (sharia and customary law), with the**

Convention by repealing all discriminatory provisions to ensure that women and girls enjoy the same rights as men in all areas of life;

(b) **Urgently repeal article 33 (5) (c) of the Constitution, which provides that the prohibition of discrimination does not apply in respect of adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and devolution of property upon death.**

Access to justice

10. The Committee is concerned about the barriers faced by women in gaining access to justice. It is particularly concerned that women often have to resort to cadi courts and district tribunals, which are not sensitive to gender issues and continue to apply discriminatory provisions. While welcoming the fact that in 2009 most high court judges were women, the Committee notes with concern the lack of information on the gender composition of other courts.

11. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Design a comprehensive judicial policy to eliminate the barriers faced by women and girls in gaining access to justice, provide adequate resources, including legal aid, and set up a mechanism to monitor its implementation;**

(b) **Promote the appointment of women judges at all levels of the judiciary, including in cadi courts and district tribunals, and adopt temporary special measures in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on the subject;**

(c) **Enhance women's awareness of their rights and legal literacy in all areas of the law and the Convention, to enable them to avail themselves of procedures and remedies to claim their rights under the Convention;**

(d) **Strengthen efforts to provide training for judges, cadis, prosecutors, police officers and the legal profession on women's rights and combating violence against women.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

12. The Committee is concerned that coordination between the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the National Women's Council and its Bureau remains weak, that their responsibilities are not clearly defined and that they have insufficient capacity, resources, autonomy and/or authority. It is also concerned about the insufficient implementation to date of the Gender and Women's Empowerment Policy 2010-2020.

13. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expeditiously review the national machinery for the advancement of women with a view to ensuring coordination between the relevant institutions and ensuring that each institution has clearly defined responsibilities and adequate capacity, resources, autonomy and/or authority to operate effectively;**

(b) **Conduct a midterm evaluation of the Gender and Women's Empowerment Policy 2010-2020 and ensure that it addresses all areas covered by the Convention, includes measurable indicators, a time frame and an**

effective monitoring mechanism, and that adequate resources are allocated for its implementation.

National human rights institution

14. The Committee is concerned that the State party has not yet established an independent national human rights institution.

15. **The Committee urges the State party to establish, within a clear time frame, an independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), with a mandate on women's issues, strong linkages with the national machinery for the advancement of women and the authority to consider and issue opinions on complaints submitted by women alleging violations of their rights.**

Temporary special measures

16. While noting that the Women's Act calls upon all public and private entities to adopt temporary special measures, the Committee is concerned that the State party does not systematically use such measures to accelerate the achievement of substantive or de facto equality of women and men in all areas of the Convention.

17. **The Committee recommends that the State party implement effectively section 15 (1) of the Women's Act and increase significantly the use of temporary special measures, including quotas, in education, health, employment and any other relevant areas. The measures should include specific targets and time frames, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on the subject, as a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of the substantive equality of women and men in all areas covered by the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged.**

Stereotypes and harmful practices

18. The Committee is deeply concerned about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society. It also remains concerned about the very high prevalence of harmful practices, in particular female genital mutilation, child marriage, polygamy and levirate, and the fact that they are not prohibited by law.

19. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To adopt legal provisions explicitly prohibiting harmful practices, such as polygamy, child marriage, female genital mutilation, levirate and unequal inheritance rights for women, provide for adequate sanctions and ensure the effective implementation of the provisions;**

(b) **To expeditiously adopt a comprehensive strategy to eliminate stereotypes and harmful practices that discriminate against women;**

(c) **To reinforce awareness-raising programmes targeting children, men and women, officials at all levels, teachers, parents and traditional and**

religious leaders, on the negative effects of harmful practices and discriminatory stereotypes on women's enjoyment of their rights;

(d) **To cooperate with the media to enhance understanding of the concept of equality of women and men in public and private life and convey positive images of women.**

Female genital mutilation

20. The Committee remains deeply concerned that the practice of female genital mutilation remains widespread, affecting the vast majority of girls and women. While noting that the State party accepted a recommendation in the context of the universal periodic review in 2015 to adopt and implement effective legislation aimed at banning the practice, the Committee is concerned that the State party has adopted no time frame to implement the recommendation.

21. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To expedite the adoption of legislation criminalizing female genital mutilation, prosecute and adequately punish those responsible, and compensate victims;**

(b) **To raise awareness among health practitioners regarding female genital mutilation and the remedies and assistance available to victims, including psychological counselling;**

(c) **To provide alternative means of livelihood for practitioners of female genital mutilation.**

Violence against women

22. The Committee notes the adoption in 2013 of the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act, but is concerned that violence against women remains widespread. It is particularly concerned about:

(a) The lack of criminalization of marital rape and the unclear provisions in the Domestic Violence Act relating to the definition of "aggravated" domestic violence and allowing for out-of-court settlements, which often do not take into account women's best interests;

(b) The insufficient implementation of the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act owing, for example, to a lack of resources and the absence of regulations, guidelines and effective reporting mechanisms;

(c) The lack of support for women who are victims of violence, which is preventing them from gaining access to justice effectively, and the insufficient support and rehabilitation services available to them;

(d) The lack of official disaggregated data relating to violence against women and girls, including on the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions and sentences, as well as out-of-court settlements.

23. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To amend its legislation to ensure that marital rape is explicitly criminalized and adequately sanctioned; that the definition of "aggravated" domestic violence is based on objective elements, in line with international**

standards, and explicitly covers all forms of violence, including psychological violence; and that provisions allowing for out-of-court settlements are repealed or accompanied by adequate legal safeguards to ensure that mediation is not imposed on the victim;

(b) **To implement the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act effectively throughout the territory of the State party by adopting the necessary regulations and guidelines, reinforcing reporting mechanisms, allocating adequate resources and strengthening the Victims of Violence Advisory Committee;**

(c) **To guarantee that women, including refugee women, have effective access to justice by making available confidential and gender-sensitive complaint mechanisms, reinforcing legal aid programmes, ensuring that alleged perpetrators of violence are duly prosecuted by a competent criminal court, and protecting and compensating victims;**

(d) **To strengthen psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women who are victims of violence;**

(e) **To establish a reliable system for the collection of statistical data on violence against women, disaggregated by age, form of violence and the relationship between the victims and the perpetrator, and on the number of complaints, out-of-court settlements, prosecutions, convictions and sentences imposed on perpetrators, as well as on reparation provided to victims.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

24. The Committee notes with concern that there have been no prosecutions under the Trafficking in Persons Act (2007) and that only one investigation is currently under way. It is also concerned about the lack of information on the number of victims of trafficking and on the measures taken to address exploitation of prostitution of women and girls and child sex tourism, as well as about the lack of programmes to support women wishing to leave prostitution.

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Conduct a study to investigate the extent and root causes of trafficking in women and girls and exploitation of prostitution;**

(b) **Implement the Trafficking in Persons Act effectively, including by allocating adequate resources, ensure early identification and referral of victims of trafficking, prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators, and provide free legal and psychological support and compensation to victims of trafficking;**

(c) **Adopt measures to address exploitation of women and girls in prostitution and child sex tourism, and provide assistance and rehabilitation to victims, as well as economic alternatives to prostitution.**

Participation in political and public life

26. While noting the measures taken by the State party to promote the participation of women in political life, such as the appointment of a female Vice-

President, the Committee is concerned that the participation of women in political and public life remains very low. It is particularly concerned:

(a) That women's representation in the National Assembly remains very low and has even decreased from 13.2 per cent in 2002 to 9.4 per cent in 2015;

(b) That women are underrepresented in local councils;

(c) That only 4 of 19 ministries are headed by women and there are no women governors or mayors.

27. **In line with its general recommendation No. 23 on women in political and public life, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen efforts to promote women's representation in decision-making positions, including at high levels in the Government, the National Assembly, the judiciary, the decentralized bodies and in the civil service at the national, regional and local levels;**

(b) **Expeditiously implement section 15 (1) of the Women's Act by adopting temporary special measures for women's equal representation in political and public life, including statutory quotas, with sanctions for non-compliance, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on the subject.**

Women human rights defenders

28. The Committee is concerned about reports that women human rights defenders, in particular those working on sexual and reproductive health and rights, face harassment, attacks, threats and intimidation.

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party create an enabling environment for the participation in public life of women human rights defenders, including those working on sexual and reproductive health and rights, in accordance with international standards, and protect them from harassment, intimidation and violence.**

Nationality

30. The Committee is concerned about reports that a high number of children are not immediately registered at birth and that cumbersome procedures are in place for the registration of children above 5 years of age. It notes with concern reports of obstacles to the registration of the birth of children born out of wedlock, often resulting from the stigmatization faced by single mothers.

31. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that all children born in the State party, including those born out of wedlock or in rural areas, are immediately registered at birth to enable them to gain access to citizenship, education and health, and that it take steps to put an end to the stigmatization of children born out of wedlock and their mothers.**

Education

32. The Committee commends the State party for achieving gender parity in enrolment in primary education and for setting up a trust fund for girls' education, but remains concerned about:

(a) The lower completion rate of girls at the primary level compared with that of boys, their considerably lower enrolment and retention rates at the secondary and tertiary levels and in vocational education, and the insufficient use of temporary special measures in this regard;

(b) Disparities between rural and urban areas in access to education, quality of education and adequacy of school infrastructure, including sanitary facilities;

(c) High dropout rates among girls, especially in rural areas, as a result of child marriages and early pregnancies;

(d) The insufficient number of female teachers to serve as role models, especially in rural areas;

(e) The lack of adequate gender and age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health rights education in schools;

(f) Reports of frequent cases of sexual harassment of girls in schools by peers and teachers;

(g) The lack of inclusive education for girls and women with disabilities, and the absence of temporary special measures in this regard.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen efforts to improve the quality of education, in particular in rural areas, and the enrolment and retention of girls and women at all levels, including by adopting a new policy and strategy on education that mainstreams gender effectively; allocating adequate resources; ensuring the adequacy of school infrastructure, in particular sanitary facilities; increasing the number of female teachers; and addressing the indirect costs of education and the high costs of tertiary education;**

(b) **Strengthen the use of temporary special measures to promote access to education by girls and women living in poverty, rural women and girls and women with disabilities;**

(c) **Promote the retention of pregnant girls in school and the reintegration of mothers after childbirth and ensure the effective implementation of section 28 of the Women's Act, which prohibits withdrawing girls from school for the purpose of marriage;**

(d) **Implement comprehensive programmes on sexual and reproductive health and rights as a regular part of the school curriculum, providing girls and boys with adequate, age-appropriate information on responsible sexual choices;**

(e) **Strengthen efforts to ensure access to inclusive education for girls and women with disabilities, including by allocating adequate resources;**

(f) **Adopt policies that address sexual abuse and harassment in school and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished.**

Employment

34. While noting that the Women's Act prohibits discrimination against women in employment, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) The low participation of women in the formal sector, vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market and the lack of temporary special measures in this regard;

(b) The gender wage gap and the fact that the Labour Act (2007) does not explicitly incorporate the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(c) The absence of legislation explicitly criminalizing sexual harassment in the workplace;

(d) The lack of information on the activities of the labour inspectorate and on complaints by women about employment discrimination, as well as on any mechanism available to monitor compliance by the private sector with the Labour Act.

35. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to eliminate horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market and promote women's access to the formal sector, including through the use of temporary special measures;**

(b) **Ensure that women in the formal and informal sectors are covered by social protection programmes;**

(c) **Amend the Labour Act (2007) to explicitly include the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and adopt measures to implement this principle in order to narrow and close the gender wage gap, and establish a mechanism to conduct job evaluations with methods that are free from gender bias;**

(d) **Criminalize sexual harassment in the workplace, include in national legislation a broad definition of sexual harassment in the workplace that covers conduct that creates a hostile working environment, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, and adopt effective measures to prevent, monitor and adequately punish sexual harassment in the workplace;**

(e) **Collect information on the number, nature and results of labour inspections conducted and the complaints registered, and strengthen mechanisms to monitor compliance with the Labour Act and the relevant provisions of the Women's Act by both public and private entities.**

Health

36. The Committee notes the efforts made by the State party to improve the health status of women, but notes with concern:

(a) The high rates of maternal mortality and child mortality;

(b) The high number of adolescent pregnancies and the insufficient measures taken to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, including modern contraceptives;

(c) The fact that abortion is criminalized except when the life or health of the pregnant woman is at risk, and the impact that that has on the high maternal mortality rate;

(d) The disproportionately high HIV prevalence among women and the prevalence of mother-to-child transmission of HIV;

(e) The fact that, in accordance with section 29 (1) of the Women's Act, women's access to health-care services, including those relating to family planning, is governed by personal law.

37. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Increase efforts to reduce maternal mortality by ensuring adequate sexual and reproductive health services, including access to antenatal, delivery and postnatal services, and prevention and treatment of anaemia;**

(b) **In that regard, consider the technical guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce preventable maternal morbidity and mortality, drawn up by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/21/22);**

(c) **Reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies by ensuring access to age-appropriate information and education on sexual and reproductive health rights for girls and boys, and in particular for out-of-school children and adolescents;**

(d) **Provide adequate access to affordable modern methods of contraception, including emergency contraception, to all women and girls;**

(e) **Expeditiously amend its legislation to decriminalize abortion, removing all punitive measures, in particular for women undergoing abortion, expand the grounds for legal abortion to cases of rape, incest and severe foetal impairment, and ensure the availability of safe abortion and post-abortion services;**

(f) **Increase efforts to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS among women as well as mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and ensure the availability of antiretroviral drugs for women living with HIV.**

(g) **Expeditiously amend section 29 (1) of the Women's Act to remove the reference to "personal law" so as to ensure women's access to health-care services, including those relating to family planning, independently of women's personal status, and to ensure that, in practice, women can gain access to health care without inhibition.**

Economic empowerment of women

38. The Committee welcomes the initiatives taken by the State party to promote the economic empowerment of women, such as the provision of microcredits, but is concerned that women's access to credit remains insufficient and that women's economic empowerment has not been sufficiently mainstrea ned within the overall development strategies of the State party.

39. **The Committee recommends that the State party evaluate the results achieved with the initiatives taken thus far to promote the economic empowerment of women and, based on the results, adopt a coherent strategy on women's economic empowerment that feeds into the overall development strategies of the State party. It also recommends that the State party develop adequate indicators and a monitoring mechanism for the strategy and include as key elements of the strategy access to credit, markets, land and other productive resources.**

Rural women

40. The Committee is concerned that rural women and girls have limited access to income-generating opportunities, credit, land and other productive resources, justice, health, education and participation in decision-making processes relating to issues that are of concern to them.

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a comprehensive strategy that includes temporary special measures and feeds into rural development plans to ensure that rural women have access to education, health, justice, employment, economic opportunities, markets, productive land, agricultural training and extension services, credit, seeds, tools and political participation, in particular as regards rural development. The State party should also ensure that rural women are aware of their rights and can participate effectively in decision-making processes relating to issues that are of concern to them.**

Women with disabilities

42. The Committee is concerned that women and girls with disabilities have limited access to inclusive education, health, employment and participation in political and public life.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party expeditiously adopt legislation to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with a view to ensuring that women and girls with disabilities have effective access to inclusive education, health, justice, employment and participation in political and public life, among other areas. The law should provide for the use of temporary special measures.**

Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women

44. The Committee notes that homosexual acts are criminalized in the State party and that "aggravated homosexuality" carries sentences of up to life imprisonment. It also notes with concern acts of incitement to hatred against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women in the State party and the arbitrary detention of women perceived to be lesbian.

45. **The Committee urges the State party to repeal the provisions of the Criminal Code on "unnatural offences" and "aggravated homosexuality", end the arbitrary detention of lesbians and provide them with effective protection from violence and discrimination and provide appropriate training to law enforcement officials.**

Women in detention

46. The Committee is concerned that women in detention live in deplorable conditions and are subjected to violence, including rape, by guards and/or male detainees, and that such cases are not adequately investigated and prosecuted. The Committee also is concerned that most women in detention have been convicted of infanticide.

47. **The Committee urges the State party to ensure that living conditions in detention centres are compliant with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules); that women are under the supervision of female guards and that gender-sensitive complaint mechanisms are available to them; and that all cases of violence against women in detention are investigated effectively and prosecuted. The Committee also urges the State party to conduct a study on the phenomenon of infanticide and ensure that women charged with infanticide have access to psychological assessment and care.**

Marriage and family relations

48. While noting the delegation's statement that the State party will consider good practices in other countries with Muslim populations that have non-discriminatory personal status laws that are in line with the Convention, the Committee remains deeply concerned:

(a) That issues relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, marital property, adoption, burial and devolution of property on death are still regulated under personal laws (sharia and customary law), which contains provisions that discriminate against women;

(b) That the Women's Act provides only for women's "equitable" access to property, which is not compliant with the Committee's standard of equality. While commending the State party in the case of *Matty Faye v. Dawda Jawara*, the Committee is concerned that standards of equity were followed, rather than equality, as required by the Convention;

(c) That child marriage, polygamy and levirate are regulated under personal law and are not prohibited;

(d) That the registration of marriages is not systematically ensured, especially in rural areas.

49. **In line with article 16 (2) of the Convention, the Committee's general recommendation No. 21 on equality in marriage and family relations and joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Undertake a study on good practices in other countries with Muslim populations that have non-discriminatory personal status laws that are in line with the Convention, and organize an expert meeting on the issue in which religious and traditional leaders of the State party participate;**

(b) Harmonize national legislation, including the Constitution, the Women's Act and personal laws (sharia and customary law), with the Convention, repealing all discriminatory provisions to ensure that women enjoy the same rights as men in marriage, divorce, inheritance, marital property, adoption, burial and devolution of property on death, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 29 on article 16 of the Convention (economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution);

(c) Replace the term "equitable" with "equal" in references in the Women's Act to women's access to property and ensure that judges interpret the Act accordingly in their judgements;

(d) Ensure that the minimum age of marriage is set at 18 years for both girls and boys, that child marriage is criminalized and adequately sanctioned and that polygamous marriages and levirate are prohibited, without exception;

(e) Strengthen efforts to register all marriages, especially in rural areas.

Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention

50. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

51. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.

Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework

52. The Committee calls for the integration of a gender perspective, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, into all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and into the post-2015 development framework.

Dissemination

53. The Committee recalls the obligation of the State party to systematically and continuously implement the provisions of the Convention. It urges the State party to give priority attention to the implementation of the present concluding observations and recommendations between now and the submission of the next periodic report. The Committee therefore requests that the present concluding observations be disseminated in a timely manner, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the National Assembly and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation. It encourages the State party to collaborate with all stakeholders concerned, such as employers' associations, trade unions, human rights and women's organizations, universities, research institutions and the media. It recommends that the present concluding observations be disseminated in an appropriate form at the local community level to enable their implementation. In addition, the Committee requests that the State party continue to disseminate the

Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and relevant jurisprudence, in addition to the Committee's general recommendations, to all stakeholders.

Technical assistance

54. **The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect.**

Ratification of other treaties

55. **The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments[1] would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to consider ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which it is not yet a party.**

Follow-up to the concluding observations

56. **The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 11 (b), 21 (a)-(c) and 27 (b) above.**

Preparation of the next report

57. **The Committee invites the State party to submit its sixth periodic report in July 2019.**

58. **The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).**

[1] The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.